

Attorney Docket No.: T7093(C)
Serial No.: 10/568,562
Filing Date: February 17, 2006
Confirmation No.: 6500

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): Apparatus for preparing and dispensing batches of an oil and water containing emulsion comprising one or more post-added ingredients, the apparatus comprising a frame comprising

- a source unit (a) comprising one or more component reservoirs (1);
- selection means for selecting the desired components and/or their ratio
- a source unit (b) comprising component reservoirs for post added ingredients (b1) wherein the post added ingredients are arranged in at least two families;
- selection means for selecting the desired post-added ingredients;
- processing means (2) suitable for mixing the components from the component reservoirs and the post-added ingredients;
- a dispensing unit (7) for dispensing the resulting oil and water emulsion,

wherein each family of post-added ingredients is composed such that each member thereof is highly similar in colour, taste and consistency such that any residue which may remain in the processing means will not have an adverse effect on the perception of the product by the end-user thereby allowing a variety of food products to be prepared and dispensed through the dispenser (7) in batches without the need for extensive cleaning operations when there is a product switch.

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Claim 2 (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the dispensing unit (7) is suitable for use in a batch process and dispensing only one product at a time.

Claim 3 (Previously presented): Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the processing means (2) comprises a pre-mixer unit (3) suitable for creating an oil and water emulsion.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): Apparatus according to claim 1, which comprises a dedicated mixer (6) for each family of post-added ingredients(bl).

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): Method for preparing an oil and water emulsion in a batch system wherein the apparatus according to claim 1 is used and wherein the source unit (a) comprises separate reservoirs (1) for a composition selected from the group comprising oil phase, an aqueous phase, emulsifier, tomato base, mustard, mayonnaise base, dressing base and sauce base.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): Method for preparing an oil and water emulsion, wherein the apparatus comprises dedicated mixers (6) for each family of post-added ingredients and wherein the families of ingredients are selected from the group comprising flavouring agents, structuring agent, herbs and colourants.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): Method for mixing components for the preparation of water and oil emulsion type food products, using an apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the components of an oil phase reservoir, aqueous phase reservoir and emulsifier reservoir are mixed in a pre-mixer (3) to obtain an emulsion, followed by addition of post-added ingredients (1b) via dedicated mixers (6) for each family of post-added ingredients.

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Claim 8 (Withdrawn): Method for the preparation of a dressing using an apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the source unit (a) comprises separate reservoirs (1) that are provided with an oil phase, an aqueous phase preferably below pH 3.8 and an emulsifier, said oil phase, aqueous phase and emulsifier are pumped to a pre-mixer creating an emulsion, followed by addition of post-added ingredients (b1) from the family of herbs, the family of colorants and the family of flavourings via dedicated post-mixers, and dispensing the dressing.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): Apparatus for preparing and dispensing batches of an oil and water containing emulsion comprising one or more post-added ingredients, the apparatus comprising a frame comprising

- a source unit (a) comprising one or more component reservoirs (1);
- selection means for selecting the desired components and/or their ratio
- a source unit (b) for post-added ingredients (b1) wherein the post-added ingredients are arranged in at least two families;
- selection means for selecting the desired post-added ingredients;
- processing means (2) comprising mixing means suitable for mixing the components from the component reservoirs and the post-added ingredients;
- a dispensing unit (7) for dispensing the resulting oil and water emulsion,

wherein the ratio of the volume of the product that is dispensed to the volume of the mixing means is at least 5:1; and

wherein the volume of the conduits between the last mixer and the dispensing unit is less than 10 vol% of the dispensing volume thereby allowing a variety of food products to be prepared and dispensed through the dispenser (7) in batches without the need for extensive cleaning operations when there is a product switch.

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Claim 10 (New): Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the batch of food product dispensed has a volume of 1 to 200 ml and is prepared in a time within 1 to 60 seconds.